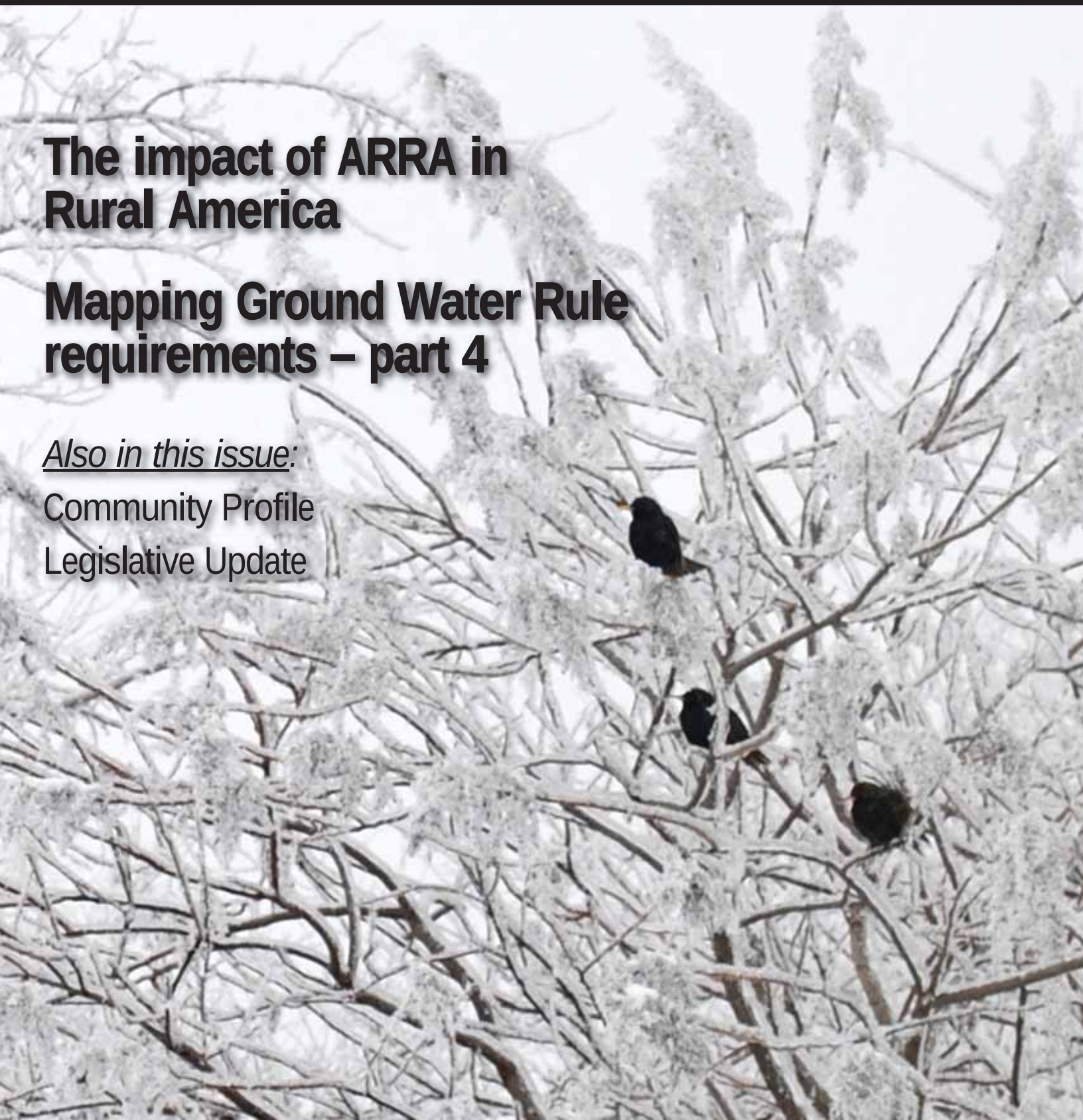
RURAL matters

The magazine of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership

2010
2011
Issue 6/6



The impact of ARRA in Rural America

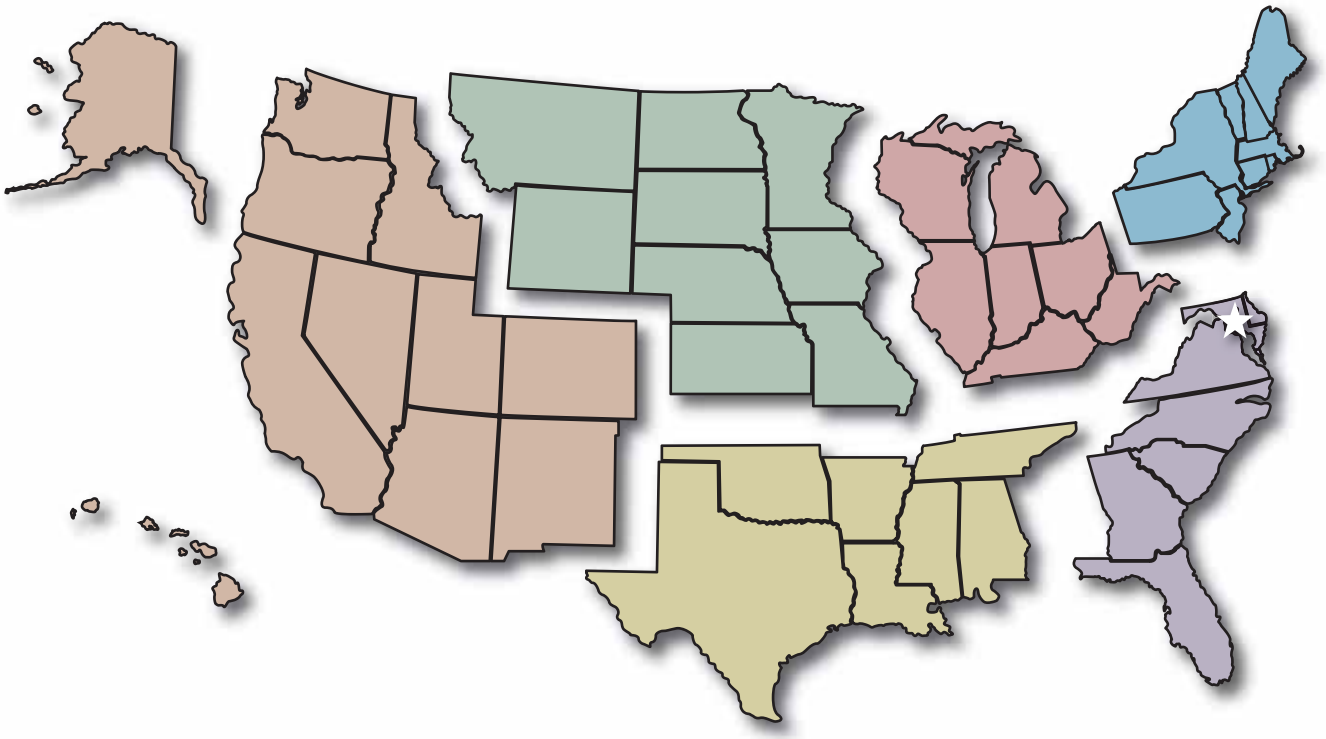
Mapping Ground Water Rule requirements – part 4

Also in this issue:

Community Profile

Legislative Update

Rural Community Assistance Partnership:
A network of six regions and a national office



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2010/2011
Issue 6

RURAL matters

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features

Photo by Stephen Padre

departments


Photo courtesy of Ohio EPA

Photo courtesy of Melissa L. Jones

Improving the quality of life in rural communities

RURAL matters

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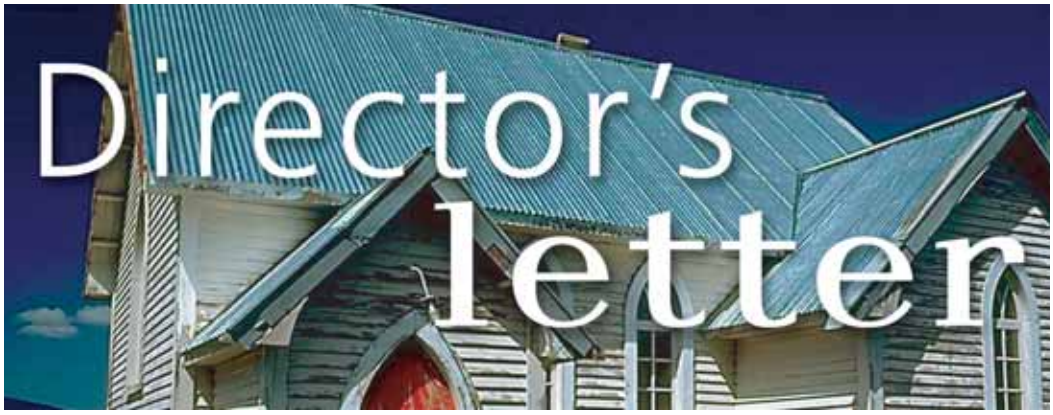


Robert Stewart
RCAP Executive Director

Although it has never gone out of fashion, it seems that these days you hear the word *change* being used in an ever-increasing variety of situations. There was the "Change we can believe in" slogan from the Obama campaign, which itself was changed into "The change we need." There has been a change in Congress with the House of Representatives switching control from the Democrats to the Republicans. Congress recently changed the "Don't ask, don't tell' policy regarding service in the military. This time of year we change our calendars to a new year. Here at the RCAP national office, we changed locations (actually just a few blocks from the previous location). Fairly recently we have all seen major changes in our economy, in political movements, in our sense of security, and in so many areas of life that are impacted by new technologies. Recounting all the changes I have seen in my lifetime would be not only a difficult and daunting task, but ultimately a boring one (just ask my children!).

One change that has led to significant controversies is the notion of climate change. Whether we are now experiencing climate change as a result of human-caused or natural conditions, a combination of factors, or just due to cyclical global climatic patterns does not matter to the small water utility that is faced with reduced water supplies. These may be the result of increased groundwater withdrawals, lower stream flows and lake levels resulting from less precipitation, reduced snow melts, or decreased availability (and increasing costs) associated with increased demands. Whatever the reason, water utilities must always be prepared to deal with such situations that can adversely affect their ability to deliver safe and affordable water to their customers.

In December, the EPA's National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) released and forwarded to EPA an important final report from the council's Climate-Ready Water Utilities Working Group. This report "was to provide findings and recommendations relating to the development of a program enabling water and wastewater utilities to prepare long-range plans that account for climate-change impacts." It did not seek to assign blame for potential impacts or quantify potential reductions in clean water resources. Rather, as the group's name suggests, the intent was to assist utilities in getting ready for whatever impacts they might face as a result of climatic change. A link to the full report will be placed on the RCAP website as soon as it becomes available.

Among the report's recommendations are ones that acknowledge that, while there is an overwhelming amount of information on climate change, little has been done to translate this information into actions that might be taken by water utilities to adapt to any potential changes and mitigate the hardship on utilities and their customers. Continued education and training is needed as are other activities, such as improved watershed planning, utility and location-specific mitigation measures, better coordination among all impacted agencies and utilities, and improved outreach and technical-assistance efforts aimed at the smallest water utilities.

Olga Morales, who works in New Mexico for the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), the Western RCAP, was a co-chair of the working group and was pleased to report unanimous agreement among its members regarding their recommendations. While we will explore some of the issues regarding this initiative in future issues of *Rural Matters*, it is important to note that for small water utilities, change is inevitable. Whether the change results from climatic factors, new regulatory mandates, economic downturns, population increases, workforce issues, or other potentially unforeseen circumstances, it will still be the responsibility of the leaders and managers of these small systems to respond, to be resourceful and resilient, and to continue to supply those services that are so crucial to the growth and prosperity of our rural communities. ■

ruraldevelopments

News and resources from the Environmental Protection Agency

EPA issues Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Sustainability Policy

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Sustainability Policy with the goal of increasing the sustainability of water and wastewater infrastructure in the United States.

Communities across the country are facing challenges in making costly upgrades and repairs to their aging water infrastructure, which includes sewer systems and treatment facilities. Making this infrastructure last longer while increasing its cost-effectiveness is essential to protecting human health and the environment and maintaining safe drinking water and clean water bodies. The new policy is part of EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson's priority to protect America's waters.

The policy emphasizes the need to build on existing efforts to promote sustainable water infrastructure. The policy also focuses on working with states and water systems to employ comprehensive planning processes that result in projects that are cost-effective over their life cycles, resource-efficient, and consistent with community sustainability goals. The policy encourages effective utility-management practices to build and maintain the level of technical, financial, and managerial capacity necessary to ensure long-term sustainability.

The policy represents a collaborative effort between EPA and its federal, state, and local partners. Working with these partners, EPA will develop guidance, provide technical assistance, and target federal, state and other relevant federal financial assistance in support of increasing the sustainability of America's water infrastructure.

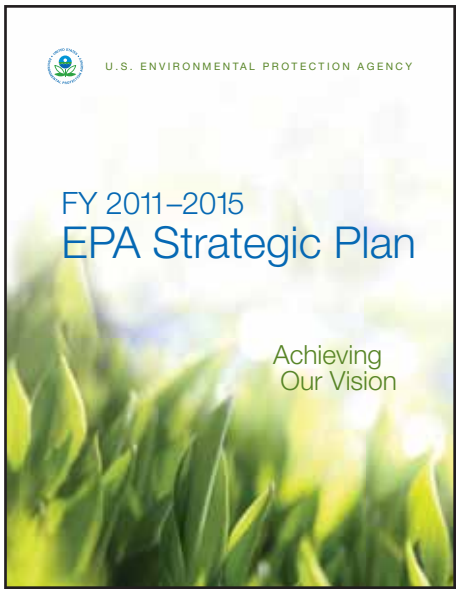
More information: *http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/sustain/Clean-Water-and-Drinking-Water-Infrastructure-Sustainability-Policy.cfm*

EPA presents five-year plan on agency priorities

WASHINGTON (EPA) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued its fiscal year (FY) 2011 to 2015 strategic plan, which provides a blueprint for advancing EPA's mission and Administrator Lisa P. Jackson's priorities.

This plan presents five strategic goals for advancing the agency's environmental and human-health mission, accompanied by five cross-cutting fundamental strategies that seek to adapt the EPA's work inside and outside the agency to meet the growing environmental protection needs of the day. The plan will guide the agency to foster a renewed commitment to new possibilities for achieving the vision of a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable environment.

The five-year plan includes new benchmarks that track progress against Jackson's seven priorities, such as taking action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and adapt to climate change, protecting America's waters, increasing the use of smart growth and sustainable develop-



ment strategies in communities, building and maintaining strong state and tribal partnerships, working for environmental justice, and ensuring that chemical health and safety information is available to the public.

The five strategic goals for advancing the agency's environmental and human-health mission are:

- Taking action on climate change and improving air quality
- Protecting America's waters
- Cleaning up communities and advancing sustainable development
- Ensuring the safety of chemicals and preventing pollution
- Enforcing environmental laws

Jackson has committed the agency to pursuing these priorities in the years ahead to fulfill EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment. In addressing these priorities, EPA will continue to affirm the core values of science, transparency and the rule of law. The agency sent notification letters to more than 800 organizations and individuals requesting comment on the draft plan.

Congress requires all federal agencies to develop a strategic plan covering a five-year period, which is updated every three years. EPA developed the FY 2011-2015 strategic plan after receiving extensive comments from stakeholders and the public. The plan is prepared in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

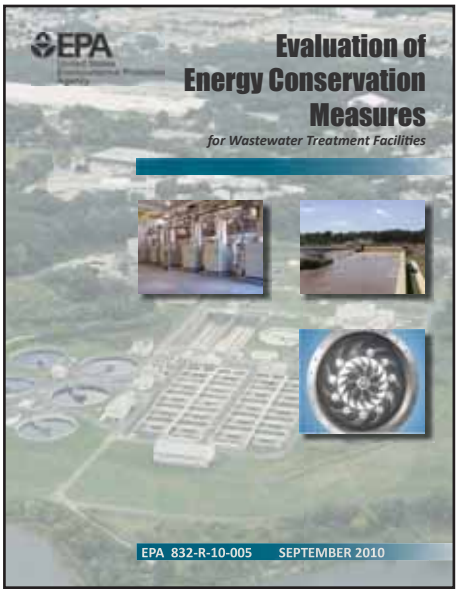
More information on the strategic plan: *www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm*

EPA provides information on innovative and emerging energy-conservation measures to help wastewater utilities reduce energy consumption

As part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) commitment to expanding cost saving, energy conservation, and efficiency programs, it is releasing a new technical document to assist municipal utility owners and operators in finding information on cost-effective energy-management and energy-conservation measures and technologies to reduce total energy usage at their wastewater-treatment facilities. The document, "Evaluation of Energy Conservation Measures for Wastewater Treatment Facilities," presents technical and cost information about energy-management and energy-conservation measures and technologies.

Technical and cost data were developed from literature sources and provided by manufacturers and operating facilities. The document provides preliminary information on innovative and emerging energy-conservation measures and technologies that have the potential for substantial energy savings. In addition, the document includes nine in-depth facility studies that further examine application and cost information for various full-scale, operational energy conservation measures and technologies.

For more information and to view a copy of the document: *http://water.epa.gov/scitech/wastetech/publications.cfm*



All-hazards risk-assessment and consequence-analysis tools for drinking water and wastewater utilities

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is releasing two software tools for risk assessment and consequence analysis:

- The Vulnerability Self-Assessment Tool (VSAT), an upgraded all-hazards risk-assessment tool
- The Water Health and Economic Analysis Tool (WHEAT), a newly developed consequence-analysis tool

The release of VSAT and WHEAT will provide drinking water, wastewater, and combined utilities of all sizes with the capability to assess, plan for, and better respond to human-caused threats and natural disasters.

VSAT is an interactive desktop software tool that employs a proven methodology to enable users to perform customized risk assessments. The upgraded tool not only evaluates human-caused threats but has a new feature that allows users to assess four different natural-disaster scenarios: hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes. VSAT has the flexibility for the user to assess other types of natural disasters as well.

WHEAT is an intuitive desktop software tool that assists drinking water utility owners and operators in quantifying public health impacts, utility financial costs, and regional economic impacts of an accidental or adverse event. Currently, WHEAT generates consequence results based on

continued on next page

continued from previous page

two scenarios for drinking water utilities: 1) release of a hazardous gas and 2) loss of operating assets. There are plans to develop similar wastewater utility modules.

The benefits to drinking water and wastewater utilities using these tools are:

- Tools are easy to use due to their intuitive software design
- Users can easily import consequence results from WHEAT into VSAT to better refine consequence assessments that support overall risk assessments
- Users can use VSAT to develop utility-specific risk-analysis summaries and reports and create an emergency response plan
- Reports from VSAT and WHEAT can assist in setting resource-allocation priorities and aid in business continuity planning
- Tools can help in building more secure and resilient drinking water and wastewater infrastructure to ensure clean and safe water

The VSAT and WHEAT tools are available for download free of charge on EPA's website at *http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/techtools/index.cfm*

EPA to expand chemicals testing for endocrine disruption

WASHINGTON (EPA) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified a list of 134 chemicals that will be screened for their potential to disrupt the endocrine system. Endocrine disruptors are chemicals that interact with and possibly disrupt the hormones produced or secreted by the human or animal endocrine system, which regulates growth, metabolism and reproduction. Administrator Lisa P. Jackson has made it a top priority to ensure the safety of chemicals, and this is another step in this process.

"Endocrine disruptors represent a serious health concern for the American people, especially children. Americans today are exposed to more chemicals in our products, our environment and our bodies than ever before, and it is essential that EPA takes every step to gather information and prevent risks," said Jackson. "We are using the best available science to examine a larger list of chemicals and ensure that they are not contaminating the water we drink and exposing adults and children to potential harm."

The list includes chemicals that have been identified as priorities under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and may be found in sources of drinking water where a substantial number of people may be exposed. The list also includes pesticide-active ingredients that are being evaluated under EPA's registration-review program to ensure they meet current scientific and regulatory standards. The data generated from the screens will provide robust and systematic scientific information to help EPA identify whether additional testing is necessary, or whether other steps are necessary to address potential endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

The chemicals listed include those used in products such as solvents, gasoline, plastics, personal-care products, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals, including benzene, perchlorate, urethane, ethylene glycol, and erythromycin.

Also announced Nov. 16 were draft policies and procedures that EPA will follow to order testing, minimize duplicative testing, promote equitable cost-sharing, and to address issues that are unique to chemicals regulated under the SDWA.

After public comment and review, EPA will issue test orders to pesticide registrants and the manufacturers of these chemicals to compel them to generate data to determine whether their chemicals may disrupt the estrogen, androgen and thyroid pathways of the endocrine system.

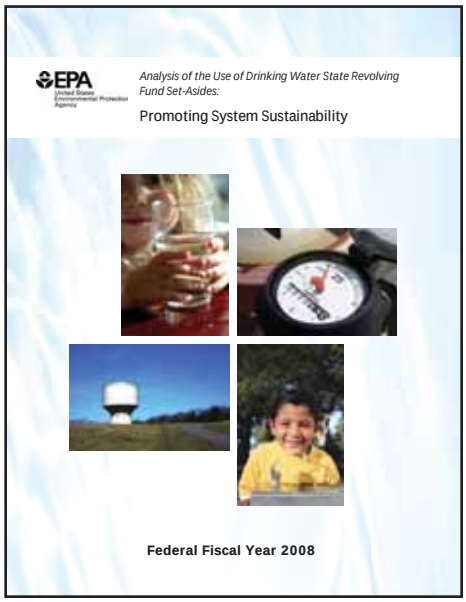
EPA is already screening an initial group of 67 pesticide chemicals. In October 2009, the agency issued orders to companies requiring endocrine disruptor screening program data for these chemicals. EPA will begin issuing orders for this second group of 134 chemicals beginning in 2011.

EPA has the most comprehensive mandated testing program for hormone effects in the world. The program is the result of a multi-year effort that includes validation of the science through a transparent scientific review process.

More information: *www.epa.gov/endo*

Analysis of the Use of Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Set-Asides: Promoting System Sustainability

EPA is releasing the Analysis of the Use of Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Set-Asides: Promoting System Sustainability. This document highlights activities financed by Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) capitalization grant set-asides to promote capacity-development



efforts. A national "one-year snapshot" for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2008 is provided, describing the four different set-asides and highlighting activities that states are pursuing to build system capacity. The body of this document includes specific examples of set-aside uses that states may find relevant to their own capacity-development programs.

Copies of this document will be available in hard copy by contacting the Water Resource Center at 202/566-1729 and identifying document number EPA 816-R-10-016. You may also contact the National Service Center for Environmental Publication 800/490-9198 to obtain hard copies. Electronic versions may be found on the EPA website at *http://water.epa.gov/type/drink/pws/smallsystems/state_guidance.cfm#state*

Independent science advisory board draft review supports EPA science on mountaintop mining impacts

WASHINGTON (EPA) – On Sept. 28, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) independent Science Advisory Board (SAB) released its first draft of a review of EPA's research into the water-quality impacts of valley fills associated with mountaintop mining. In its draft review, the SAB supports EPA's scientific research and agrees with EPA's conclusion that valley fills are associated with increased levels of conductivity (a measure of water pollution for mining practices) in downstream waters, and that these increased levels of conductivity threaten stream life in surface waters.

"This independent review affirms that EPA is relying on sound analysis and letting science and only science guide our actions to protect human health and the environment," said EPA's Assistant Administrator for Water, Pete Silva. "We will continue to follow the science and solicit input from all stakeholders as we safeguard water quality and protect the American people."

The SAB reviewed EPA's draft report, "A Field-Based Aquatic Life Benchmark for Conductivity in Central Appalachian Streams," which uses field data to derive an aquatic life benchmark for conductivity. The benchmark is intended to protect 95 percent of aquatic species in streams in the Appalachian region influenced by mountaintop mining and valley fills. Based on that science, EPA released guidance in April designed to minimize irreversible water quality impacts caused by mountaintop mining.

Following the completion of the external peer review and review of public comments, the report will be revised and published as a final report.

A growing body of scientific literature, including previous and new studies performed by EPA, show significant damage to local streams that are polluted with the mining runoff from mountaintop removal. To protect water quality, EPA has identified a range of conductivity (a measure of the level of salt in the water) of 300 to 500 microSiemens per centimeter that is generally consistent with protecting life in Appalachian streams. The maximum benchmark conductivity of 500 microSiemens per centimeter is a measure of salinity that is roughly five times above normal levels.

Water We Drink website has new articles

The Water We Drink: Small Community Outreach Campaign, which offers information about maintaining safe, sustainable, and secure water supplies in small and rural communities, has added new content to its website.

The website, located at *www.nesc.wvu.edu/waterwedrink*, is a joint effort of RCAP and the National Environmental Services Center (NESC), located at West Virginia University, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

New articles about source water protection, setting water and sewer rates, water and energy, and the benefits of joining your state's Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) are available to complement previous articles related to pharmaceuticals and personal care products in our waters, impending labor shortages, and aging infrastructure.

The articles are written especially for those who oversee local water and wastewater services, and may be downloaded at no charge and used for educational purposes, such as reprinting in newsletters and magazines, training sessions, and websites.

RCAP's Director of Training and Technical Services Joy Barrett, Ph.D., says, "Our main message is that local leadership is essential in protecting water resources and maintaining critical water and wastewater services, and there are practical options for ensuring the short- and long-term viability of these systems. The new articles encourage local officials and small water utility board members to be proactive in working with local utilities to determine adequate rates, prevent water pollution, conserve water and energy, and partner with neighboring utilities to plan and respond to emergencies."

The website also offers a brochure, a PowerPoint presentation and instructor's guide, and fact sheets about keeping pharmaceuticals and personal care products out of our waterways. The Water We Drink campaign strives to raise awareness about crucial water issues and solutions, and invites use of the articles and resources to support or complement state and local efforts. ■

USDA releases report on the impact of the Recovery Act on America's rural communities

More than 300,000 jobs estimated to have been saved or created; millions of Americans will benefit from improved services

WASHINGTON (USDA) – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development Dallas Tonsager issued a report on Oct. 20 on how the agency's distribution of loan and grant funds provided to the agency through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has helped the nation's rural residents. The report estimates that millions of business owners, agricultural producers, Internet users, and homeowners will benefit and that more than 300,000 jobs are being created or saved. The job estimates contained in the report are derived from recipient-reported data or program-based economic models.

"With Rural Development's loans, grants, and loan-grant combination financing for new and existing programs, we have leveraged our Recovery Act funds to ensure the greatest bang for the taxpayer's buck, allowing our agency to make unprecedented and lasting investments in rural America," said Tonsager. "I am proud of what we have accomplished over the last two years towards building livable, innovative, and sustainable rural communities."

Of the $40.7 billion in Recovery Act funding obligated by USDA, Rural Development obligated more than half for projects ($21.2 billion in program-level funding) through seven programs. In all, 95,000 loans and 2,500 grants were provided to recipients in all 50 states, American territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. This record level of federal investment leveraged additional private investment in communities across the country, demonstrating the positive impact that public-private partnerships can have on rural communities and economies.

Throughout the report are various examples of how Recovery Act funding is making a difference in rural communities.

USDA has funded 854 water and wastewater projects to improve public health and environmental quality; 563 public safety facilities; 312 cultural and educational facilities, including 196 libraries; and 180 healthcare facilities.

Photo courtesy of FEMA

Recovery Act funding will also make possible a $23 million project to bring an end to the persistent sewage problems that have plagued the colonias community of Yuma County, Ariz. Colonias are low-income, rural communities along the U.S.-Mexico border. More than $18 million in Recovery Act loan and grant funds will be added to funds provided by other federal and state agencies and the North American Development Bank. The project will connect residents to a nearby municipal treatment system. The community will abandon individual septic systems and cesspools, reduce contamination of the groundwater table from failing septic systems, improve public health and safety, and improve the water quality of the nearby Colorado River.

The report outlines the following results (obligations):

- Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) loans and grants: $3,529,090,888 in funding; 25,800 jobs.
- Business and Industry (B&I) guaranteed loans: $1,601,007,139 in funding; 33,000 jobs.
- Community Facilities (CF) Program loans and grants: $1,389,529,796 in funding; 32,500 jobs.
- Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG): $19,398,942 in funding; 13,000 jobs.
- Single Family Housing Direct (SFHD) loans: $1,562,971,449 in funding; 19,500 jobs.
- Single Family Housing Guaranteed (SFHG) loans: $10,056,306,317 in funding; 125,000 jobs.
- Water and Waste Disposal (WWD) Program loans and grants $3,271,300,435 in funding; 66,000 jobs.

The entire report can be read at *www.usda.gov/documents/USDA_ARRA_AnnualReport_10192010.pdf*

President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) into law in 2009. It is designed to jumpstart the nation's economy, create or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The act includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need. More information about USDA's efforts regarding the Recovery Act is available at *www.usda.gov/recovery*. More information about the Federal government's efforts on the economic stimulus is available at *www.recovery.gov*.

Through its Rural Development mission area, USDA administers and manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers, and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than $142 billion in loans and loan guarantees. ■

RCAP

Progress report on RCAP's work with Recovery Act funds

In April 2010, RCAP received a $5 million grant of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds through U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD). Since then, RCAP has been using the economic stimulus funds to provide additional assistance to water and wastewater systems in rural communities as an extension of its ongoing program of technical assistance and training ("Technitrain").

RCAP is using part of the grant to produce a number of publications for borrowers of funds from USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS). The publications will cover a range of topics to help small, rural water and wastewater systems with effective management, operations and maintenance. RCAP will distribute these publications in print, on CD, and on the web.

As of the end of October 2010, RCAP had provided technical assistance to 284 projects in 41 states – 164 in the drinking water area and 114 relating to wastewater. The median population of a community receiving assistance was 1,416 residents, and 72 percent of RCAP communities had populations under 3,300. In total, RCAP assistance benefited 1.2 million rural residents in 445,776 households, and 21 percent of these were classified as low-income, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The majority of RCAP's work in the Technitrain ARRA 2010-2011 project has been in the form of assisting communities with facilities development (126 projects) and management and finance (72). RCAP staff assisted communities in completing 30 vulnerability assessments and 32 emergency-response plans in 12 states. In addition, RCAP technical assistance providers leveraged $78.8 million for 18 projects in six states.

Through the second quarter, RCAP staff conducted eight trainings in six states, reaching a total of 32 local officials. Additional skill-building took place when RCAP technical assistance providers attended board meetings and shared tools.

Under its Recovery Act grant, RCAP is committed to providing technical assistance and training to at least 420 projects, all of which will be applicants and/or recipients of ARRA funds from RUS. Projects are either referred to RCAP by RD state and area agency personnel or identified in coordination with RD staff as needing assistance provided under this project.

Technical assistance is targeted to RUS water and/or wastewater funding-eligible communities, and all are small and rural. Systems serving fewer than 2,500 people and low-income residents receive priority consideration. Many communities operate facilities that are out of compliance with state and federal safe drinking water or wastewater disposal regulations. ■

Community leader Dr. Larry Dyck and Southeast RCAP Technical Assistance Specialist Val Green stand on the third dam on Twelve Mile River, Catechee, S.C. The intake pumps for Easley Central Water District can be seen on the far side of the dam.

Photo by Bob Britts

Southeast RCAP to navigate complex waters of a threatened supply

By Bob Britts

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.

Water Is Life®

The Easley Central Water District serves about 3,000 residents in mostly rural Pickens County, S.C. The district's service area encompasses many low-income families between Liberty and Central, including the old mill village of Catechee.

The only water supply for the district is threatened by the proposed removal of a dam on Twelve Mile River in Pickens County. This dam is the last of three dams remaining from textile mills that used dams for power generation and their water supply. This dam creates the impoundment or reservoir that has been the sole water supply for Easley Central Water District.

There are no other local water companies that currently have the capacity to supply water to the district. In this part of the state, the water table is very low, and groundwater sources like wells are difficult to use and unreliable. During the drought of 2008-2009, the area was under extreme conditions, and several surface water sources almost went

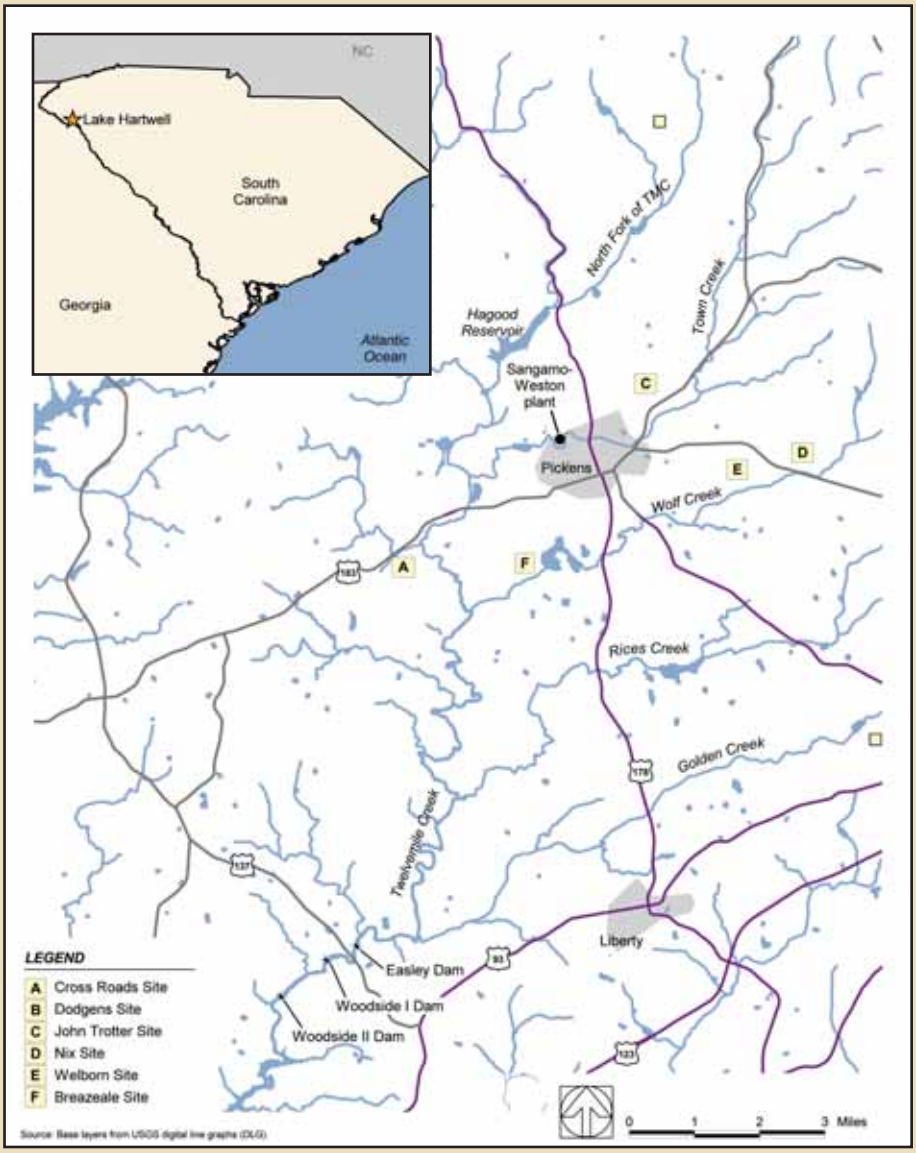
dry. The water supplies for 30,000 people in Georgia and South Carolina were threatened.

In the 1970s, the Sangamo-Weston electrical capacitor plant operated in the Town of Pickens. Over a period of several years, the plant discharged a toxic chemical called PCB into the land and into Twelve Mile River. Some 20 years later, PCBs were detected in the sediment in the river bottom and in the fish in downstream Lake Hartwell.

The water supply from Lake Hartwell was approved for the systems in populous Anderson County. However, the fish could not be eaten, and the PCBs remained in the sediment in the river and in the lake. It became an EPA Superfund site, and federal and state agencies from South Carolina and Georgia were involved with the cleanup efforts.

As of 1998, the federal court judge's order had not been complied with as the cleanup of the PCB contamination had not started. The successor owner of Sangamo-Weston, the Schlumberger Company, was brought to court, and a new judge's order was issued to spend out of the $12 million trust fund as soon as possible.

Removal of the first and second dams was the primary action required in the judge's order. As of late 2009, many local interests had submitted proposals to the overseers of the trust fund requesting part of the funds for their projects. There was a public, in-person survey and an online vote to determine how the trust fund should be spent. A clear majority favored removal of the third dam. Other proposals included a water-education center, boat ramps, and education for fishermen.



Maps taken from Lake Hartwell Restoration and Compensation Determination Plan, March 2006.

A massive treatment plant was built on undeveloped land near Catechee, and contractors began the sediment removal and cleanup in April 2010. The sediment is pumped from a dredge in the river uphill to the treatment plant. The sediment is being treated in a three-step process, and PCB-free water is being returned to the river. The first and second dams should be removed in early 2011.

No funds from the trust fund have been formally approved to remove the third dam. Removing the third dam, removing PCB from the sediment above the third dam, and creating a new dam and reservoir for Easley Central Water District may cost as much as $4 million. There is about $2.5 million available in the trust fund for the removal of the third dam and creation of a new impoundment.

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, the Southeast RCAP, is working with the district under RCAP's USDA Rural Development Technitrain program. The water district needs to raise its rates and take other measures to maximize the grant portion of a loan and grant package. Presently the district cannot afford to take on a $1 million loan. State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds will not be available until July 2011 if the district is eligible, and these will amount to only about $500,000.

Southeast RCAP will provide assistance to the district to help it meet loan qualifications, complete its applications and leverage funds. Southeast RCAP has never taken on this type of project before; it is complex and interesting, and Southeast RCAP is up to the challenge. ■

Britts a Regional Program Manager for Southeast RCAP in South Carolina.

Republicans win rural – and the House

The explanation by many is that Democrats lost the South, but the rural losses were mostly in the north.

By Bill Bishop and Julie Ardery

Republicans won the U.S. House of Representatives in the midterm elections on Nov. 2 largely by winning districts with high proportions of rural voters.

Two-thirds of the 60 House seats switching from Democrat to Republican in this election were in the congressional districts with the most rural voters.

Before the election, almost half (61) of the 125 most rural districts were held by Democrats. By the end of Election Day, the number of rural Democrats had been cut to just 22. Just 18 percent of the most rural House districts are now represented by Democrats.

The accompanying map tells the story. It shows the 125 House districts where more than 33 percent of voters live in rural communities. (The average for all 435 House districts is 21 percent rural.)

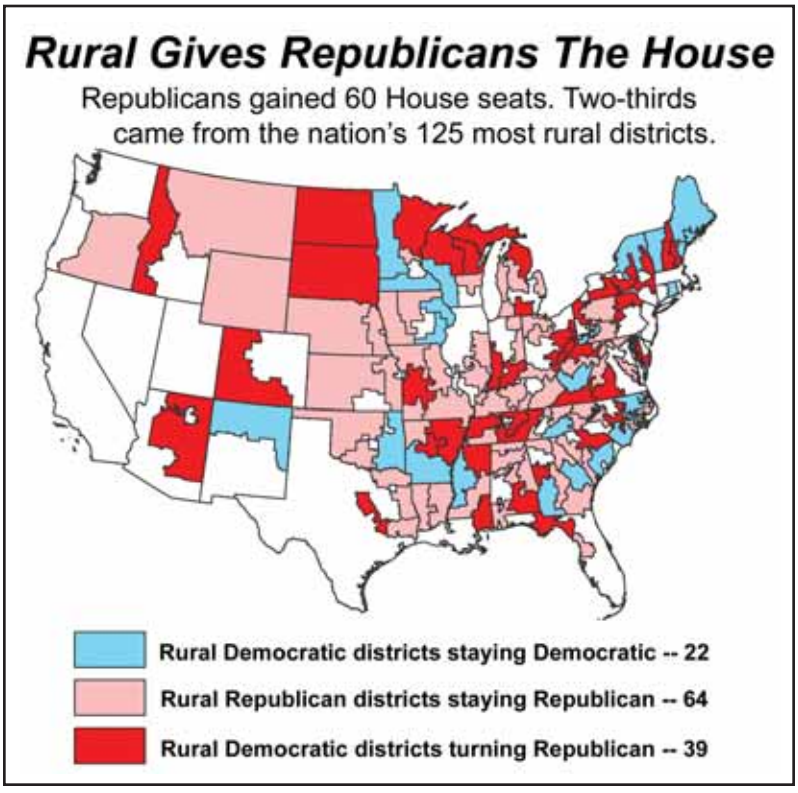
Blue districts on the map were Democratic before the election and Democratic at day's end. There are 22 rural Democrats who survived the 2010 election to serve another term. Light red districts are Republican districts that didn't change with the election. There are 64 solidly Republican districts out of the most rural 125 districts.

The dark red rural districts began the day with Democratic representatives but ended the evening with freshly-elected Republican members of Congress.

There are 39 rural districts that switched from Democratic representation to Republican. These account for 65 percent of the 60 seats Republicans captured from Democrats on Nov. 2.

How many Republican rural districts flipped Democratic? Not one.

Stories about the election refer to the strong Republican rural vote. But they tend to mix up Southern and rural.



"In a bloodbath of a night for Democrats, the most gruesome returns came in from rural America," write *Politico's* Ben Smith and Jonathan Martin. "They lost the overwhelming number of gubernatorial and Senate races in the South, Midwest and interior West. Even more striking, House Democrats lost seats in every one of the 11 states of the old Confederacy."

But look at the map. Most of the seats lost by the Democrats were well north of the Mason-Dixon Line, many in the Upper Midwest and New England.

Yes, Democrats lost three of their seats in rural Tennessee. But they also lost three in rural New York.

Democrats lost two rural seats in both Arkansas and Virginia. But they also lost two seats each in rural Michigan, rural Pennsylvania and rural Ohio.

And before Nov. 2, both of New Hampshire's representatives were Democrats. Now they will be Republicans. Will liberals now ask, "What's the matter with New Hampshire?"

Seniority did little good for Democrats. Minnesota's Jim Oberstar had served 18 terms and was chair of the House Transportation Committee. He lost. Rep. Chet Edwards of Texas had served 20 years in the House. He lost.

The split between rural and urban voters has been growing since the 1970s.

Throughout that time, however, moderate Democrats have been able to hang on and represent close to half of the districts in rural America. Those numbers were cut by two-thirds in the election, and there is very little left of the Democratic Party in the nation's most rural congressional districts.

A version of this article originally appeared on the Daily Yonder blog on Nov. 4. You can visit the blog at www.dailyyonder.com

Census may cause big changes for rural legislative districts

When results of the census are finally tabulated, rural legislators are likely to feel the greatest change, reports David Harrison for Stateline.org. Early census data released in late September show that "the recession has not stopped a century-long movement of people out of rural areas and into cities and suburbs, a trend that will have significant impact in next year's redistricting debates," writes Harrison. "The rural districts get geographically bigger as more and more population has to be absorbed in the urban and suburban districts," Gary Moncrief, a political scientist at Boise State University in Idaho, said to Harrison.

As the U.S. population has grown, all legislators – urban, suburban and rural – are going to represent more people, writes Harrison. That will affect everything from the cost of campaigns to legislators' workloads and travel time. In anticipation of the changes from re-districting, some states are already making changes. In Alaska, a constitutional amendment will ask the state's voters to increase the size of the state legislature adding two state senators and four House members.

This news brief was originally published in The Rural Blog on Oct. 5, 2010, at http://irjci.blogspot.com/2010/10/census-may-cause-big-changes-for-rural.html ■

Legislative Update

By Ari Neumann

Election recap

November's midterm election is bringing major changes to Washington, D.C., as Republicans regained the majority in the House of Representatives by picking up 63 seats and netted a six-seat gain in the Senate.

As a result of these changes, there will be new leadership in place on many of the committees with jurisdiction over RCAP's programs in the 112th Congress.

In the House, Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla. 03) will chair the Agriculture Committee, Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky. 05) will chair the Appropriations Committee, and Rep. John Mica (R-Fla. 07) will head the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), the chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, lost her bid for re-election, and her position will be filled by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.).

There will also be significant changes for the Appropriations committees in both chambers. Many of the members of Congress who lost were strong supporters of RCAP, and they will be missed. However, the incoming members present RCAP with a new opportunity to reach out and spread the word about who RCAP is and what it does.

Outlook for the 112th Congress

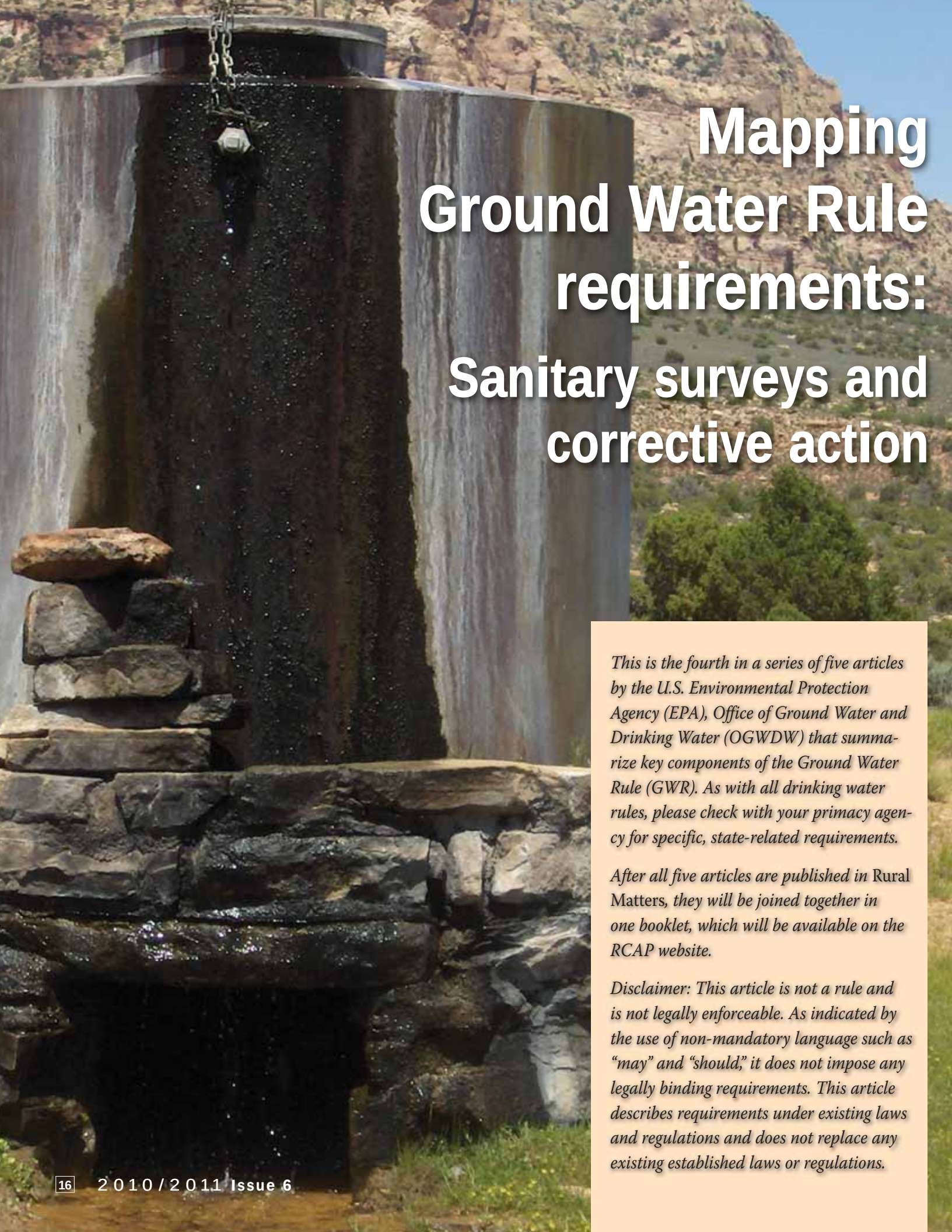
Although many pundits are predicting two years of gridlock in the upcoming Congress, RCAP is optimistic that it can make some progress this term. While many of the new members campaigned against government spending, most of them are from rural areas and therefore understand the needs rural communities face and the value of federal investment in rural development.

Nearly two-thirds of the House seats changing hands are in districts that are predominantly rural, and many of the Senate seats changing hands are in states with large rural populations—places like North Dakota, Arkansas and Indiana. An aggressive outreach and education program from RCAP can ensure that all members, both new and old, understand the value of an investment in RCAP and see that the benefits of the program greatly outweigh its costs.

Another reason RCAP is optimistic is because clean and safe water is not a partisan issue. Now that each chamber of Congress is controlled by a different party, non-partisan issues, such as water infrastructure, are good opportunities for the parties to find common ground. In a poll commissioned by the Water Infrastructure Network, more than eight in ten Americans of all political persuasions agreed that clean and safe water is a national issue that deserves federal investment. Two of RCAP's top legislative priorities—the State Revolving Fund reauthorization and the Water Trust Fund bill—enjoy bi-partisan support in both chambers and present the parties with opportunities to work together to address our water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

While recognizing the challenges presented by the current political environment, RCAP is hopeful that good things will come from the 112th Congress on the water and wastewater front. ■

Neumann is the new Director of Policy Development and Applied Research in the RCAP national office.



Mapping Ground Water Rule requirements:

Sanitary surveys and corrective action

This is the fourth in a series of five articles by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) that summarize key components of the Ground Water Rule (GWR). As with all drinking water rules, please check with your primacy agency for specific, state-related requirements.

After all five articles are published in Rural Matters, *they will be joined together in one booklet, which will be available on the RCAP website.*

Disclaimer: This article is not a rule and is not legally enforceable. As indicated by the use of non-mandatory language such as "may" and "should," it does not impose any legally binding requirements. This article describes requirements under existing laws and regulations and does not replace any existing established laws or regulations.

Sanitary surveys and corrective action

What are the basic requirements of the Ground Water Rule (GWR)?

Two of the four GWR requirements (source water and compliance monitoring) were discussed in previous articles. Source water monitoring, which includes triggered, additional, and assessment monitoring, is required for systems not providing 4-log treatment. Compliance monitoring is how an operator documents 4-log treatment of viruses by monitoring and maintaining a state-determined minimum disinfectant residual. This article discusses the two remaining requirements: sanitary surveys and corrective action.

How the GWR impacts the state's role in sanitary surveys

The purpose of a sanitary survey is to review the public water system's source, equipment, facilities, and treatment procedures to ensure they have been properly maintained and operated and, in turn, to make certain that safe drinking water is distributed to the public.

continued on next page

An overview of this series of articles on the Ground Water Rule

The goal of this series of articles is to help ground water systems (GWSs) navigate their way through the Ground Water Rule (GWR) requirements.

- Article 1: Introduction to the rule
  Some of the key elements of the rule were introduced. Find this article in Rural Matters 2010 issue 3, page 18 or at *www.rcap.org/sites/default/files/rcap-files/RM/2010/May-June2010.pdf*
- Article 2: Triggered and additional source water monitoring
  Find this article in Rural Matters 2010 issue 4, page 18 or at *www.rcap.org/sites/default/files/rcap-files/RM/2010/issue4/RuralMatters-JulyAug2010-final.pdf*
- Article 3: Compliance monitoring and assessment source water monitoring
  Find this article in Rural Matters 2010 issue 5, page 18 or at *http://www.rcap.org/sites/default/files/rcap-files/RM/2010/RuralMatters-SepOct2010-final.pdf*

➲ *Current article:* Article 4: Sanitary surveys and corrective action
Sanitary surveys require utilities to evaluate eight critical elements of a public water system as well as identify significant deficiencies that may exist at the water system. Corrective action will be required for any system with any significant deficiencies.

- Article 5: Ground Water Rule Public Notification and Consumer Confidence Report requirements for community and non-community water systems
  The GWR has new public notification, special notice, and consumer confidence report requirements that affect community and non-community water systems, as well as wholesale and consecutive water systems.

Photo at left by Jay Mashburn

continued from previous page

Under the Total Coliform Rule (TCR), the states conducted sanitary surveys on a five-year cycle for community and non-community water systems (CWSs and NCWSs) that collected fewer than five TCR samples per month and every 10 years for NCWSs that disinfected their source. Under the GWR, the sanitary survey requirements have been revised for GWSs to be consistent with surface water systems by increasing the frequency and completeness of the sanitary surveys to enhance the public health protection. GWR requirements for sanitary survey frequency and deadlines are shown in Table 1.

How the sanitary surveys might impact public water systems

The GWR requires that a sanitary survey address eight specific elements and for the surveyor to identify any significant deficiencies that may exist at the water system. A significant deficiency identified during the sanitary survey must be addressed by the public water system within a specified time frame determined by the state. GWSs should be aware of the eight elements in a sanitary survey and what might be considered a significant deficiency by the state to avoid compromising the quality of the water and public health.

The eight elements and some examples of what might be evaluated are:

1. Source – well construction, potential source contamination, setback distances, source quantity and quality, well locations, source water transmission mains, site security, and general housekeeping.
2. Treatment – design criteria, plant records, past inspections, operation, maintenance, and overall management of treatment facility.
3. Distribution system – review schematics, operation and maintenance records, operating procedures, construction standards, and distribution system water quality data.
4. Finished water storage – tank integrity, operational readiness, site security, potential sanitary risks, proper maintenance checks, and operation and maintenance procedures.
5. Pumps, pump facilities, and controls – pump capacity, maintenance, pump control system, emergency power back up, pump tests, remote monitoring, controls and alarms.
6. Monitoring, reporting and data verification – compliance with site sampling and monitoring plans, monthly reports, daily logs, analytical results and monitoring data, and record-keeping requirements.
7. System management and operation – managerial, and financial and technical sustainability.
8. Operator compliance with state requirements – properly certified staff depending on the size and type of system.

If, while conducting a sanitary survey, the state identifies a significant deficiency, it is the state's responsibility to inform the public water system of the deficiency and to work with the system to correct the deficiency.

Corrective action

Corrective action is required if the GWS falls into one of these scenarios:

- Significant deficiencies identified by the state during a field visit or a sanitary survey
- One of the samples collected during triggered source water monitoring is fecal indicator-positive (FI+) and the state requests the system to go straight to corrective action
- One of the samples collected during additional source water monitoring is FI+

There are four main corrective-action options:

1. Correct all significant deficiencies.
2. Provide an alternate source of water.
3. Eliminate the source of contamination.
4. Provide treatment that reliably achieves 4-log treatment of viruses.

The GWR specifies a schedule for corrective actions. The state first notifies the

Table 1. Sanitary survey frequencies and dates

System type	Minimum frequency	Compliance date[1]
Community GWS (conducting triggered source water monitoring)	Every 3 years	Dec. 31, 2012
Community GWS providing 4-log treatment (conducting compliance monitoring)	Every 5 years	Dec. 31, 2014
Community GWS with an outstanding performance record[2]		
Non-community GWS		

1 Initial sanitary survey must be completed by the compliance date.

2 Outstanding performance records are determined by the state.

Table 2. Corrective action timeline

CORRECTIVE ACTION TIMELINE REQUIREMENTS		
Start date is…	**Within 30 days**	**Within 120 days**
Notice of significant deficiency **OR** **Notice from the lab of fecal indicator-positive sample from triggered source water monitoring and the state requires corrective action** **OR** **Notice of fecal-indicator positive sample from at least 1 of 5 additional source water monitoring samples**	**System consults with state to determine corrective action** **OR** **State specifies corrective action**	**System must complete steps outlined in corrective action plan** **OR** **System must be in compliance with state-approved corrective action plan and schedule**

GWS of a significant deficiency. The public water system then has 30 days to consult with the state to determine an appropriate corrective action. The GWR states that the system has 120 days to complete measures or steps as indicated in its corrective action plan or it must be in compliance with a state-approved corrective-action schedule.

Table 2 provides a graphic representation of the GWR requirements for corrective action.

Training opportunities

EPA has concluded its workshops and webcast trainings on the GWR at this time. However, there still may be trainings sponsored by your state, EPA region, or technical assistance providers. Contact your EPA region or state for more information on workshops or trainings that might be conducted near you. For more information on the GWR, visit the GWR homepage at *www.epa.gov/safewater/disinfection/gwr* ■

Photo by Stephen Ausmus, USDA

Frequently asked questions for sanitary surveys and corrective action

Q: Can the system alone (without input from the state or primacy agency) decide whether to go directly to corrective action or to conduct additional source water monitoring?

A: No. If a triggered source water sample is FI+, the GWS must conduct additional source water monitoring unless it is directed by the state to complete a corrective action. If any of the additional source water monitoring samples is FI+, the system must take corrective action. GWSs must consult with the state within 30 days of being notified by the state of a significant deficiency or receiving the results from the lab that one or more of the additional source water monitoring samples were FI+.

Q: Can a significant deficiency be identified only during a sanitary survey?

A: No. Under the GWR, states have the authority to identify a significant deficiency at any time.

Q: Are significant deficiencies limited to fecal contamination (i.e., only virus-related contamination)?

A: No. A significant deficiency is defined as a situation that is causing, or has the potential to cause, introduction of contamination into the water delivered to consumers.

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